

VNG, first responders continue rescue hoist training

Virginia National Guard flight crews trained with Chesterfield County Fire and Emergency Medical Services Scuba Rescue Team members on rescue hoist operations Nov. 19, 2020, in Chesterfield, Virginia, as part of the ongoing training partnership started in 2011. Together, the VNG aviators and Chesterfield first responders form the Virginia Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team.

Since the program's inception in 2011, the HART has deployed for hurricane response, flown countless hours over the waterways and landscapes of Virginia and now boasts approximately 20 trained technicians.

"It's one of the highlights of my career," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Shane Leipertz, one of the HART's helicopter pilots. "It's very, very rewarding to see how far the program has come."

The HART provides rotary wing aviation rescue hoist capabilities to conduct aerial rescues in situations with a potential loss of life, limb or eyesight or significant property damage. Virginia's aviators bring the capabilities of their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, while Chesterfield brings first responders with swift-water rescue training and other life-saving proficiencies.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/x7MCf>



Virginia National Guard flight crews train with Chesterfield County Fire and Emergency Medical Services Scuba Rescue Team members on rescue hoist operations Nov. 19, 2020, in Chesterfield, Virginia.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Soldier's 80-lb weight loss journey leads to military service

When he was 17, Staff Sgt. Roger Jackson struggled with his weight. At 5 feet, 7 inches tall, he weighed in at around 250 pounds. Now, he's 5 feet, 8 inches, 170 pounds, has spent eight years in the Virginia National Guard and is currently assigned to the 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/x7MrE>

Batterton to succeed Piper as commander of 192nd Wing

Col. Christopher G. Batterton will succeed Col. Mark Piper as the commander of the 192nd Wing, according to an announcement made Nov. 6, 2020, by Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/x7MmW>

IVAS draws Army senior leaders to MTC Fort Pickett

Maneuver Training Center Fort Pickett played host to United States Department of Defense and Army leadership in October 2020, as they visited Soldier Touchpoint 3 of the Integrated Visual Augmentation System training at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/x7Mrx>

CSM Smith's Foxhole Report – 6th Edition

Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Smith, the Virginia Army National Guard command sergeant major, talks COVID-19, ACFT and highlighting resources for Soldiers and their families in his latest Foxhole Report.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/x7MYg>

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Gallagher discusses importance of mentorship at DMA event

Brig. Gen. K. Weedon Gallagher, the Virginia National Guard Land Component Commander, spoke to participants in the Virginia Department of Military Affairs Workforce Development Mentoring Program during an event Nov. 19, 2020, at Fort Pickett, Virginia. During the event, Gallagher addressed the masked and socially-distanced mentors and mentees about the benefits of participating in mentorship programs and how to get the most out of that participation. The event was part of the year-long formal mentoring program which began in February 2020, the first of its kind for DMA.

The discussion began with Gallagher drawing from his decades of experience as a civil engineer and civilian corporate officer as well as his military experience to highlight the benefits of mentorship programs like the DMA's. For Gallagher, reaping the benefits of having a mentor started at a young age working for the Naval Facilities Engineering Command.

"It was highly focused on training and visiting a lot of different modules of the Navfac family. It was enlightening," said Gallagher. "My mentor at the time is retired now but he was quite an influence on my young career right out of college. That was a great experience, highly-structured."

Gallagher said even in organizations without a structured, regimented mentorship program, there are ways to seek out mentorship, and encouraged participation in professional development organizations.

"Through those organizations I meet people who are rock star leaders, or I'd be informed about units who were doing challenging stuff I thought would be tough to do but could help me expand a little bit," he said. "Through those organizations and that exposure, I was able to identify some mentors and ask if they were interested in mentoring me along the way."

Participants in the DMA program were able to get matched up thanks to a kickoff event back in February, when all registered mentees were able to meet with each registered mentor for a few minutes at a time, similar to a "speed-dating" event, to make sure each mentee was matched up with the right mentor for them.

"You have to have a good fit," said Gallagher. "That 'speed dating' idea is just tremendous. It's such a great idea to make sure you have that good fit."

Once that fit is made, Gallagher encouraged both parties dedicate time to preparing for the mentor-mentee interactions so both parties get the maximum benefit.

"Whether you're a mentor or mentee, I've gotten the most out of those exchanges when I carved out time, carved out bandwidth, by preparing for those meetings, preparing for those interactions," he said. "You'll get less out of it if you go into it blind."

While the benefits to the individuals in the mentor-mentee relationship are more obvious, the benefit to the organization is tremendous as well, according to Gallagher, who on the civilian side is the chief executive officer of his own small business.

Gallagher's talk culminated a challenging year for the first-ever class of DMA mentors and mentees, as their fast start quickly hit



Brig. Gen. K. Weedon Gallagher, Virginia National Guard Land Component Commander, speaks to participants in the Virginia Department of Military Affairs' mentorship program during an event Nov. 19, 2020, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

the breaks with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges, the first year of the program set the bar high, according to Walt Mercer, the DMA chief operations officer.

"Everything was going great, started out in January with our speed-dating thing to help you pick a couple names of folks you thought would be a good fit for you, and what happened? Well, we're all wearing masks," said Mercer. "It kind of threw everything off for the first three or four months. Considering all that, it's been a really good year. Overall it was a success."

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/x7Mrm>

MORE ON THE WEB

Photos: VNG conducts testing at Randolph-Macon College

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157716940389843>

New Virginia National Guard Public Information Web Site

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